

## Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 ICA-11  
TRSE-00 SOE-02 DOE-15 CIAE-00 COME-00 MCE-00 HA-05  
SP-02 /066 W

-----013234 040131Z /73

P R 040001Z MAY 78  
FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 180  
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 1970

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PORS, SHUM, SN  
SUBJ: DENIAL OF LICENSE FOR SALE OF TEAR-GAS LAUNCHERS  
TO SINGAPORE

REF: A. LONDON 2439, B. SINGAPORE 0881,  
C. LONDON 3461, D. SINGAPORE 1631

1. SUMMARY. SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT HAS INQUIRED REGARDING  
ORDER FOR U.S.- ORIGIN TEAR-GAS GUNS FROM BRITISH SUPPLIER  
FOR USE OF PRISON DEPARTMENT, WHICH IT UNDERSTANDS WAS  
DENIED BY USG ON HUMAN RIGHTS GROUNDS. EMBASSY NEVER INFORMED  
OF ALLEGED DENIAL. IF TRUE, IT COULD BECOME SOURCE OF FRICTION  
BETWEEN U.S. AND SINGAPORE. END SUMMARY.

2. REFTEL A REQUESTED INFORMATION REGARDING REPORTED DENIAL  
OF EXPORT LICENSE APPLICATION FROM BRITISH FIRM WHICH WISHED  
TO SELL SMALL NUMBER (24) OF U.S.-ORIGIN TEAR-GAS GUNS TO  
SINGAPORE FIRM FOR CONSIGNMENT TO GOVERNMENT OF SINGAPORE  
DIRECTOR OF PRISONS. REFTEL B REPEATED REQUEST FOR INFORMATION,  
POINTING OUT THAT SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT WAS SURE TO RAISE MATTER  
ONCE IT LEARNED OF REPORTED DENIAL. REFS C AND D WERE  
FOLLOW-UP REQUESTS FOR THIS INFORMATION, REFTEL D NOTING THAT  
RECENT APPROVAL OF PD-30 BY PRESIDENT WOULD APPEAR TO HAVE  
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REMOVED ANY IMPEDIMENT TO APPROVAL OF LICENSE. NONE OF THESE  
MESSAGES HAVE BEEN ACKNOWLEDGED BY DEPARTMENT.

3. AS WE EXPECTED, GOS HAS NOW LEARNED OF APPARENT DENIAL OF  
EXPORT LICENSE AND HAS BEEN TOLD BY BRITISH SUPPLIER THAT  
GROUNDS FOR DENIAL WERE "HUMAN RIGHTS RECOMMENDATIONS".  
FOLLOWING IS TEST OF LETTER TO EMBASSY, DATED APRIL 26, FROM

GOS DIRECTOR OF PRISONS:

QUOTE. DEAR SIR: OUR DEPARTMENT HAS PLACED AN ORDER FOR 24 NOS FEDERAL GAS GUN MODEL 201Z FROM THE SUPPLIER MESSRS CHYE WHATT SENG (PTE) LTD.

THE SUPPLIER MESSRS CHYE WHATT SENG (PTE) LTD. IN THEIR CORRESPONDENCE CLAIMED THAT THEIR PRINCIPALS MESSRS CIVIL PROTECTION LTD. WAS DENIED THE EXPORT LICENSE FOR THIS CONSIGNMENT BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON ON "HUMAN RIGHTS RECOMMENDATIONS". COPIES OF LETTERS PERTAINING TO THIS SUBJECT ARE ATTACHED FOR YOUR PERUSAL AND RETENTION.

THESE LAW ENFORCEMENT EQUIPMENT ARE ESSENTIAL FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF ORDER AND DISCIPLINE IN THE EVENT OF ANY UPRISING WITHIN THE PRISONS. THESE WEAPONS WILL NOT BE USED INDISCRIMINATELY ON PRISONERS UNLESS IT IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY FOR THE PROTECTION OF LIFE, LIMB, AND PROPERTY.

I WOULD APPRECIATE IF YOU COULD BRING THIS MATTER TO THE ATTENTION OF YOUR SECRETARY, STATE DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON AND REQUEST THAT HE ISSUE OUR PRINCIPALS WITH THE EXPORT LICENSE TO FACILITATE OUR NEEDS. UNQUOTE.

4. WE ARE RESPONDING TO DIRECTOR OF PRISONS WITH A LETTER SAYING THAT WE HAVE NO INFORMATION REGARDING THE REPORTED CONFIDENTIAL

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LICENSE DENIAL BUT HAVE SENT AN INQUIRY TO WASHINGTON AND WILL INFORM HIM WHEN WE RECEIVE A REPLY.

5. WE RECOGNIZE THAT SALE OF EQUIPMENT TO PRISON ADMINISTRATION MAY BE TOUCHY SUBJECT IN WASHINGTON, BUT WE ARE OBLIGATED TO RESPOND TO GOS INQUIRY. WE HOPE OUR RESPONSE WILL NOT BE NEGATIVE ONE. AS WE HAVE REPORTED TO DEPARTMENT IN DIFFERENT CONTEXT (SINGAPORE 1874), SINGAPORE PRISONS ARE PROBABLY THE BEST RUN AND SUBJECT PRISONERS TO LEAST UNDUE PRIVATION OF ANY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. THIS INCLUDES REGULAR ACCESS BY FAMILY MEMBERS TO PRISONERS, INCLUDING THOSE HELD ON POLITICAL GROUNDS. THERE HAVE BEEN NO ATTICA-TYPE DISTURBANCES IN SINGAPORE PRISONS AND IN RECENT YEARS NO SIGNIFICANT PRISON DISORDERS OF ANY SORT THAT WE ARE AWARE OF. IN SHORT, THERE IS NOTHING IN OPERATION OF SINGAPORE PRISON SYSTEM ITSELF THAT WOULD RAISE QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. IN BROADER CONTEXT, DEPARTMENT IS AWARE THAT THERE ARE DEFICIENCIES IN GOS HUMAN RIGHTS PERFORMANCE. AS DEPARTMENT'S 1978 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT TO THE CONGRESS STRESSED, HOWEVER, THESE DEFICIENCIES ARE BALANCED BY OUTSTANDINGLY FAVORABLE PERFORMANCE IN OTHER AREAS. WE ARE NOT AWARE THAT SINGAPORE HAS EVER BEEN JUDGED A "SERIOUS"

VIOLATOR OF HUMAN RIGHTS WITHIN MEANING OF PARAGRAPH 6 OF PD-30, AND CAN THUS SEE NO GROUNDS FOR DENYING THIS LICENSE.

6. NOW THAT ISSUE HAS BEEN RAISED OFFICIALLY BY GOS, SINGAPOREANS ARE CERTAIN TO TAKE MOST SERIOUSLY AN ASSERTION OF OUR PART THAT LICENSE HAS BEEN DENIED BECAUSE OF SINGAPORE'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD. THEY ARE FAMILIAR WITH OUR LEGISLATION, AWARE THAT IT HAS NOT BEEN APPLIED AGAINST COUNTRIES WHOSE HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD IS FAR LESS SATISFACTORY THAN SINGAPORE'S AND WOULD BE BAFFLED IF IT WERE APPLIED AGAINST THEM. ISSUE COULD BECOME A DISRUPTIVE ONE BETWEEN US.

7. BY COINCIDENCE, FIRST STAGING OF U.S. NAVY P-3 INDIAN  
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OCEAN RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHT THROUGH SINGAPORE SINCE GOS GRANTED PERMISSION FOR THESE FLIGHTS TOOK PLACE UNEVENTFULLY ONLY ONE DAY BEFORE DIRECTOR OF PRISON'S LETTER.  
HOLDRIDGE

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NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** SALES, EQUIPMENT, LICENSES, INCAPACITATING AGENTS  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 04 may 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
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**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
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**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** DENIAL OF LICENSE FOR SALE OF TEAR-GAS LAUNCHERS TO SINGAPORE  
**TAGS:** PORS, SHUM, SN  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014